DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 218 784 EA 014 812

AUTHOR Keesling, J. Ward; And Others
TITLE Parents and Federal Education Programs. Volume 2: Summary of Program-Specific Findings. The Study of Parental Involvement.
INSTITUTION System Development Corp., Santa Monica, Calif. Studies and Evaluation Dept.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, DC.
REPORT NO TM-6974/005/00
PUB DATE Sep 81
CONTRACT 300-78-0437
NOTE 40p.; For related documents, see EA 014 811-817.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Federal Aid; *Federal Programs; Governance; Instruction; Parent Education; *Parent Participation; *Parent Role; *Parent School Relationship; School Community Relationship; School Support
IDENTIFIERS *Elementary Secondary Education Act Title I; *Elementary Secondary Education Act Title VII; *Emergency School Aid Act 1972; *Project Follow Through

ABSTRACT

This second volume of a seven-volume study summarizes findings from each of the four programs examined--Titles I and VII of the Elementary Secondary Education Act, the Emergency School Aid Act, and Follow Through. Field researchers collected data for this report during the spring of 1980. They lived in the communities studied, 57 in all, and spent 4 months interviewing parents and project staff, observing classrooms and events, and analyzing project documents. The resultant information relates to five avenues for parental involvement in federal education programs: governance, instruction, parent education, school support, and school-community relations. Within each of these five areas, this report presents the findings for the four federal programs individually. Overall, the study revealed a wide range in the level of parental involvement. The researchers conclude that active parent participation produced real benefits for schools, parents, and children. The involvement did not occur by chance, however, but had to be deliberately stimulated. (Author/WD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED218784

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Parents and Federal Education Programs
Volume 2: Summary of Program-Specific Findings

EA 013 812

The Study of Parental Involvement

PARENTS AND FEDERAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

VOLUME 2: SUMMARY OF PROGRAM-SPECIFIC FINDINGS

J. WARD KEESLING
RALPH J. MELARAGNO
ALBERT E. ROBBINS
ALLEN G. SMITH

Studies and Evaluation Department
System Development Corporation
Santa Monica, California

TM-6974/005/00

September 1981

The research reported in this volume was conducted by System Development Corporation under Contract HEW 300-78-0437 with the United States Department of Education. Views or conclusions contained in this report should not be interpreted as representing the official opinion or policy of the Department of Education.

Project Officers, Consultants and Resource Persons, Project Personnel

Project Officers

Gerald Burns (1979-1981)
Daniel G. Ozenne (1978-1979)

Project Directors

J. Ward Keesling) Co-Directors,
Ralph J. Melaragno) 1980-1981
Raymond B. Stewart) 1978-1979

Consultants and Resource Persons

John Alden
Imani Bennet-Woodruff
Marta Bequer
Carlota Texidor del Portillo
Thomas Enderlein
Edgar Epps
Marilyn Gittell
Warren Griffin
Monica Harrison
Roger Jackson
Suzanne Jackson
Velma James
Joseph H. Kosai
Rose Koury
Patricia Lamphear
Robert Lee Linn
Manuel Nieto
Enrique Perez
Raymond Rist
Riley Simmons
Seymour Sudman
Treopia G. Washington
Rosemary Wilson

Project Staff

Raquel Cadena-Munoz
Diana Dingler
Peggy Lyons
Susan Nerenberg
Al Robbins
Olga Sanders
Allen Smith
Maxine Sparks

Secretarial Support

Julie Smith
Suzann Stahl

Former Project Staff

Hilda Borko
Woodrow Clark
Dennis Ellman
Sally Hanes
Faith Jackson
Valerie Jordan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Multi-site, multi-method research is a team effort. From design to reporting the work has been collaborative. The contributors to this volume were many, but some must be singled out for special mention.

We want to recognize, first of all, the contribution made by our former colleague, Hilda Borko, to this phase of the study. Hilda played a major role in the design of the data collection and reporting system, the preparation of the analysis packets that guided the field work, and the training of the Field Researchers.

Two other persons also made valuable contributions to the design for this phase: Raymond B. Stewart, former Project Director, and Daniel G. Ozenne, former Department of Education Project Officer. Our current Project Officer, Gerald Burns, provided the study staff with numerous suggestions, timely support, and collegial assistance that we came to value highly. In addition, representatives to the study from the four Federal educational programs that were involved gave us helpful advice on ways in which the study could be maximally useful to their programs.

This phase of the study called for some clever ideas for technical support. We got them from Suzann Stahl, who designed and implemented a system for transcribing the tape-recorded data from Field Researchers, and from Julie Smith, who oversaw all the administrative matters associated with a large senior staff and many Field Researchers.

The Field Researchers who were our eyes, ears, and minds at the study sites made this unique effort possible. We could not have carried it out successfully if they had not remained adaptable, interested, and willing to give us more time than we had planned for.

Finally, we want to express our deep appreciation to the Superintendents, Project Directors and staff members, and the parents, at each of our sites who allowed us to examine partental involvement in their projects. We would prefer being able to name them all, but because we have guaranteed anonymity to persons and places, all of those contributors have to be thanked in this general fashion.

The authors of this report are listed in alphabetical order. They shared the responsibility for preparing this volume.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PROJECT GOVERNANCE	4
TITLE I	4
ESAA	6
TITLE VII	8
FOLLOW THROUGH	9
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN INSTRUCTION	11
TITLE I	12
ESAA	13
TITLE VII	17
FOLLOW THROUGH	18
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PARENT EDUCATION	22
TITLE I	23
ESAA	23
TITLE VII	23
FOLLOW THROUGH	24
OTHER FORMS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	25
TITLE I	26
ESAA	26
TITLE VII	27
FOLLOW THROUGH	27
ADDITIONAL POLICY ISSUES AND CONCLUSIONS	29

OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF THIS VOLUME

This is the second volume in the series of reports on the Site Study phase of the Study of Parental Involvement, a study conducted by System Development Corporation for the U.S. Department of Education. This volume summarizes findings from each of the four programs. It is intended for the reader who wants to have an overview of the results specific to one or more programs in a readily accessible form. The reader who wishes to learn what generalizes across all four programs should refer to Volume 1, while the reader with a greater interest in a specific program should consult the appropriate volume concerning that program (listed in the References section). The reader interested in a comprehensive presentation of the methodologies employed in carrying out the Study should read Volume 7.

Because of its summary nature this report is presented as one chapter, divided into sections dealing with each of the parental involvement functions defined in our conceptual framework. Within each of these sections the data are summarized for each program.

Within each program, we found a very wide range in the nature and extent of parental involvement. Active parental involvement did not occur by chance; it had to be deliberately stimulated. Projects with active parental involvement components had overcome obstacles in their environment in order to establish high levels of parental participation. We also found that active participation by parents produced benefits for the schools, the parents, and the children. We concluded that parental involvement can be an effective means for projects to achieve their goals.

VOLUME II: SUMMARY OF PROGRAM-SPECIFIC FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the findings from the Site Study phase of the Study of Parental Involvement in Four Federal Education Programs. The Study of Parental Involvement is being conducted by System Development Corporation (SDC) under a contract with the U.S. Department of Education (ED), and is concerned with four federally funded educational programs:

- Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which provides "financial assistance... to local educational agencies serving areas with concentrations of children from low-income families... (to meet) the special educational needs of educationally deprived children."

- Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, also called the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA), which provides "financial assistance to meet the special needs incident to the elimination of minority group segregation and discrimination among students and faculty... and to encourage the voluntary elimination, reduction, or prevention of minority group isolation (in schools)...."

- Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, also called the Bilingual Education Act, which provides "financial assistance to local education agencies... to enable (them)... to demonstrate effective ways of providing, for children of limited English proficiency, instruction designed to enable them, while using their native language, to achieve competence in the English language."

- Follow Through, enabled as part of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, provides funds to support "comprehensive educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services as will aid in the continued development of children (from low-income families)... to their full potential."

The Study of Parental Involvement was designed to accomplish five major goals:

1. Describe parental involvement.

2. Identify contributory factors that facilitate or inhibit parental involvement.

3. Determine the consequences of parental involvement.

4. Specify successful parental involvement practices.

5. Promulgate findings.

This report is one in a series that promulgates the findings of the study. It covers the first three goals in considerable detail. An earlier report (Parents and Federal Education Programs: Some Preliminary Findings from the Study of Parental Involvement) addressed the first and part of the second goals using telephone survey data collected from a nationally representative samples of districts and schools. This report, however, presents results from an in-depth investigation of parental involvement activities at 57 local projects selected purposefully from the larger survey population. Another report in the series (Involving Parents: A Handbook for Participation in Schools) contains detailed information on the successful parental involvement practices that were uncovered during the study.

Data reported here were collected during the spring of 1980. The data were acquired by trained Field Researchers who lived in the communities and spent four months pursuing research topics relating to the nature, causes and consequences of parental involvement. Field Researchers interviewed parents and project staff, observed classrooms and events, and analyzed project documents. These data, along with the Field Researchers' own analyses, were reported to senior study staff who in turn conducted cross-site and cross-programs analyses.

The findings reported here should not be seen as a comparative evaluation of parental involvement components across programs, nor as an audit of compliance with regulations, since there were few specific statements in the legislation or regulations by which to assess the implementation of parental involvement components in local projects. Rather, this study was intended as a descriptive exploration of a much discussed but seldom studied phenomenon--parental involvement.

Field Researchers collected information relating to five ways in which parents can participate in projects. These five avenues for involvement are listed below and provide the organizing structure for this report:

1. Governance -- Participation of parents in the process of decision making for a project, particularly through mandated advisory groups.

2. Instruction -- Participation of parents in a project's instructional program as paid aides, instructional volunteers, and as teachers of their own children at home.

3. Parent Education -- Participation of parents in project activities designed to improve parents' skills and knowledge.

4. Non-Instructional Support -- Participation of parents in project activities that provide economic, political and moral support to a school or project.

5. School-Community Relations -- Participation of parents in activities sponsored by a project to improve communication and interpersonal relations among parents and staff members.

The key study findings and conclusions in each of these functional areas are summarized below. Within each area the findings for the four federal programs are presented one by one. Because local projects tended to combine operationally the last two forms of parental involvement, we report our findings together under the heading, "Other Forms of Parental Involvement."

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PROJECT GOVERNANCE

For this study "governance" means the process of making decisions or establishing policies which can affect project services or activities. We looked for instances where parents offered advice to staff and it was heeded, or where parents actually made decisions about the project proposal, classroom content and student services, personnel, project expenditures, and parental involvement activities.

TITLE I

Examination of parental participation in project decision making revealed that very few parents took part in the process as individuals or through the medium of community or educational organizations not affiliated with Title I. Almost all parental involvement in project governance occurred through District Advisory Councils and School Advisory Councils (DACs and SACs). Regarding the nature of parental involvement in governance, we found the following:

- Almost every project had an operational DAC, and invariably the majority of DAC members were parents.

- There was little involvement of DACs in project decision making.

- Four patterns of DAC participation in decision making emerged: an instance in which a DAC did not exist; seven DACs that operated only to receive information about the project; five DACs that had token involvement and rubber stamped project personnel decisions; and three DACs where there was true involvement in that advice offered by parents had an impact on ultimate decisions.

- There were differences between DACs in larger and smaller communities. There was a strong tendency for the more involved DACs to be located in the larger cities.

- Few SACs were actively involved with the making of decisions about a school's Title I project activities.

- There were six levels of SACs identifiable, ranging from locations at which no SAC existed to examples of SACs that had critical involvement with important decisions.

With respect to the factors that influenced the participation of advisory councils in decision making, we found:

- Those District Advisory Councils that had a major role in project decisions had the following attributes: they were in states that had specific Title I guidelines that were implemented and monitored; they were affiliated with Title I projects that offered a clear authority role to the DAC; they were in projects where there was a Parent Coordinator who supported but did not dominate the DAC; the DAC had received training in how to function as a group; and power in the council resided in a parent.

- The least active District Advisory Councils were characterized by these dimensions: their states had no Title I guidelines; the DAC had no specified authority; there was no Parent Coordinator; the staff attitude was that parents should only provide support for the project and its schools; the parental attitude was that the project was being carried out satisfactorily and/or parents should leave decisions to professionals; DACs either received no training or only training to acquaint them with Title I; and, the most powerful person was a professional.

- The most active School Advisory Councils occurred where there was an environment within the district inclined toward parent activism, and a key individual at the school took a leadership position to bring about an active SAC.

Information related to outcomes of advisory councils revealed that parent members frequently reported achieving personal growth because of their participation, and had developed better understandings of Title I and the local project.

ESAA

Mandated District-wide Advisory Committees (DACs) were the identified mechanisms by which parents tended to play a governance role in the projects. Concerning DACs, we found that:

- All 12 of the Site Study sites had established DACs which were operating at the time of the Study.

- On the whole, DACs at the sites were doing very little. None could be regarded as a real decision- or policy-making body. Few even participated in generating serious advice for ESAA staff, let alone making decisions.

- Although none of the Site Study DACs qualified as a decision- making group, four DACs did levy advice and suggestions that were listened to by project staff and led to occasional changes. They were genuine participants in the decision-making process, although not decision makers.

In examining the factors that tended to facilitate or inhibit parental involvement in governance, we found:

- Most ESAA DACs were not more involved in decision-making activities because Project Directors were not pushing for such a role. Our analyses suggested that Project Directors were by far the most influential actors in DAC operations. In other words, Project Directors had the means and status to establish real participatory

roles in decision making for DACs. They did not, on the whole, do so because: (1) they were not encouraged by the regulations; (2) they were constrained by the district administrative contexts within which their projects operated; and (3) they subscribed to the notion, held by both parents and educators, that education should be the province of educators.

On the other hand, the DACs at four sites were relatively more active because:

- The Project Directors at these sites were actively supportive of DACs' becoming involved in project decision making. They carried out specific measures to encourage and enhance parental leadership within the DAC; and they set up mechanisms by which DAC involvement in project decisions was facilitated and supported.

- These sites had instituted intense training efforts for DAC members which included explanations of how and why ESAA is funded and descriptions of the ways in which the project was intended to work.

In general, the study found that few outcomes were systematically associated with parental participation on DACs at the 12 sites. Impacts on the behavior and attitudes of persons touched by parental involvement in DACs--including the parent participants themselves--were limited to parents at six sites reporting that service on the DAC had made them more knowledgeable about the workings of the school system and better able to deal with the system. Patterns of impacts on educational processes and institutional arrangements were also sought. At those sites where DACs were encouraged to make serious recommendations, there was evidence that some aspects of project design had been affected in the last few years. At one site, the influence of the DAC was being manifested in the broader sphere of district-wide desegregation planning.

TITLE VII

Parental participation in decision making about on-going Title VII projects was restricted to parents who were members of the mandated Community Advisory Committee (CAC). The major findings with respect to CAC participation in governance were:

- All 13 sites in the study had a CAC.
- In virtually every CAC, the majority group was parents of limited English proficient students in the project.
- With a few exceptions, CACs were not deeply involved in governance. Most did not advise or otherwise contribute to decisions.
- The data revealed three distinct patterns of CAC involvement in governance: (1) no involvement: seven projects where the CAC played neither an advisory nor decision-making role in the project; (2) token involvement: three projects where the CAC was given some opportunity to discuss major project issues but ultimately had no influence on the decisions; and (3) advise/decide involvement: three projects where the CAC contributed input which ultimately influenced the governance of the project.

Several factors emerged which seemed to have had substantial influence on the level of parental involvement in governance. The first two dealt with the attitudes of parents and staff. On the one hand, many parents, particularly at non-involvement sites held the prevalent attitude that "education was for professionals and that they, as parents, were unqualified to participate in the project." Further, most of the staff at these sites held a similarly negative perception of parental involvement and viewed parents as capable of only supporting the efforts and following the direction of the staff. Despite this concensus regarding the unqualified status of parents, no training was

offered in governance skills which might have helped alleviate this obstacle. Rather, the burden of learning how to become an effective and active participant in the decision-making process was placed entirely on the parents themselves.

The next two factors highlighted the importance of parent coordination. Although 11 of the 13 Title VII sites had a staff person acting in the capacity of a Parent Coordinator, few of these were actually supportive of an active role for parents in the area of governance. Not surprisingly, supportive Parent Coordinators were found almost exclusively at high parental involvement sites. However, supportiveness, in and of itself was not sufficient. That is, the Parent Coordinators had to be accessible to the parents at the school level in order for their supportiveness to positively influence the direction of parental involvement. Actively involved CACs were also characterized by the prominent decision-making role assumed by one or more members of the CAC. Project staff at these sites acted in conjunction with the CAC and often as resources in support of the CAC. Lastly, CACs with meaningful involvement in governance did not exist in a vacuum. Rather, they maintained an information network beyond the immediate Title VII project, thereby increasing their opportunities for establishing a broader base of support and decreasing their dependency on the project staff.

We examined the consequences of parental involvement in two broad categories: personal--affecting parents, staff and students, and educational/institutional--affecting the project, schools, and the district. Although we found a few instances where parents made meaningful contributions to the project, by and large, the outcomes reported were of a personal nature, with parents benefiting the most from their involvement by becoming more confident self-assured.

FOLLOW THROUGH

The Follow Through regulations are quite explicit in requiring parental involvement in project governance and mandate the establishment of project

Policy Advisory Committees (PACs) for that purpose. The major findings about the structure and functioning of those committees in the area of governance are summarized below:

- All 16 sites had Policy Advisory Committees, but in practice those committees tended to be structured quite differently from PACs described in the Follow Through regulations.

- Although most PACs participated fully in decisions about parental activities, only seven of the 16 PACs studied played more than a token role in project decisions about student services, budget, or personnel; none approached the comprehensive governance role defined for them in the Follow Through regulations.

- There were four relatively distinct patterns of involvement in decisions about student services, project budget, or personnel. At the lowest level were three PACs that had no involvement at all in these decisions. Next were four PACs that had only token involvement; they did discuss important project matters, but their input had little impact on staff decisions. Third, there were two PACs that participated only in decisions about special student activities--such as field trips--conducted by parents for children. Finally, there were seven PACs that had major involvement in decisions about student services, project expenditures or personnel; at these sites parents' advice was offered, and that advice had a real impact on staff decisions.

- Very few PACs saw governance as their primary function in the project. Even where PACs were actively involved in governance, most saw their primary roles in other areas, such as parent education, non-instructional support, or school-community relations.

There seem to be several factors that contributed to the generally low level of involvement by Follow Through PACs in project governance relative to the

regulations. First, there were limited opportunities for PACs to become involved in decisions. Second, parents tended not to push for a greater role in governance. Finally, project and school staffs tended not to encourage PACs to participate more in governance, believing that project decisions were the proper domain for professionals.

Despite these factors, there were some PACs that did play an active role in project decisions. These active advisory groups were characterized by three factors that were generally absent from less active PACs: one or more influential experienced parents pushed for PAC involvement in governance; at least one staff member vigorously supported that push; and, extensive training was provided for PAC members on Follow Through and the PAC's role within it. Turning to the consequences of parental involvement in PACs, we sought information both about effects on parents as individuals and effects on the school or project as an institution. While there were outcomes reported relating specifically to a governance role, most of the personal and institutional outcomes of PAC participation reflected the finding that PACs spent most of their time working in areas other than governance.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN INSTRUCTION

A second way in which parents can become involved in local projects is through participation in the instructional process. Three aspects of that involvement were examined in the study: (1) parents working as paid paraprofessionals (aides); (2) parents working as classroom volunteers; and (3) parents participating as teachers of their own children at home. More specifically, we looked for instances where parents either helped individual students or groups of students to master academic skills or where parents prepared instructional materials. We also looked at the extent to which parent paraprofessionals and classroom volunteers participated in instructional decision making at the classroom, program, and school levels. Because the findings relating to the three possible forms of parental involvement in instruction were different, they will be summarized separately within each program.

TITLE I

None of the 16 projects participating in SDC's Site Study had a formal mechanisms for instructional volunteers, and only two projects had systematic home tutoring programs (although there were numerous instances of activities leading to parents providing informal assistance with schoolwork). Accordingly, attention was focused on parents as paid aides. With regard to the nature of this activity, SDC found that:

- Parents were serving as paid aides at most projects.
- There were few instances of formal policies to hire parents as aides, and neither Parent Coordinators nor School Advisory Councils were active in the aide component of projects.
- Parent aides were an integral part of teaching in Title I classrooms.
- Parent aides had no input into decisions about projectwide or schoolwide instruction, and in a few cases were included in decisions about classroom instruction.

The major factor contributing to the absence of instructional volunteers in Title I projects was the presence of volunteer programs under other auspices. Few formal home tutoring programs were found because, respondents reported, they were not considered when the project was designed. With regard to factors influencing parents as paid aides, the following was found:

- Parents were employed as aides through informal practices. They were recruited because they were known to school personnel, and hired by principals who preferred someone who was familiar.
- Parents serving as paid aides was not considered parental involvement because there was no mandate for it. Further, most parents who were aides had held the position for many years and no longer had children participating in the Title I project.

- Parent aides were given meaningful instructional tasks because teachers felt they could lighten the teaching load and provide more individual attention to students.

- Attitudes of parents and teachers affected parental participation in decisions about instruction. Parents sometimes felt this was unnecessary, or that they were not qualified; professionals sometimes felt they should make all such decisions.

It was reported that students developed better attitudes toward their work when their parents were involved with the school's instructional program. In the two projects where systematic home tutoring occurred a similar outcome emerged, along with evidence of improved student achievement. Parents who were active, as aides or as home tutors, reported having a better understanding of the project and becoming more supportive of it.

ESAA

Concerning parents as <u>paid paraprofessionals</u>, we found that:

- Five of the 12 ESAA sites studied had parents acting as aides.

- Despite regulations that called for assurances that parents should be given preference in the recruitment and hiring of teacher aides, the data indicated that few conscious attempts were made by LEAs to hire parents. Nonetheless, many parents were recruited because district procedures typically gave school principals a major hand in recruitment and hiring.

- No distinctions were made between parent and non-parent aides in terms of their duties, training, or evaluation.

- In general, paid aides had little or no input into decisions regarding the design or implementation of the paid paraprofessional component, nor into decisions involving classroom methods and materials. At two sites aides were given definite decision-making opportunities with respect to classroom activities. At these sites, decision-making opportunities seemed to be related to the provision of training workshops.

The second potential avenue for parental involvement in the instructional process was through volunteerism. We discovered that:

- None of the 12 sites had an ESAA-sponsored volunteer component in operations. Therefore, neither parents nor non-parents were found functioning in that role.

ESAA parents serving as teachers of their own children at home turned out to be nearly as rare at these 12 sites as ESAA-supported instructional volunteerism.

- One site of those sampled placed emphasis on utilizing parents as teachers of their own children.

Several factors were identified as having contributed to shaping parental involvement in the ESAA instructional process. According to our data, few sites had parents operating in the role of paid paraprofessionals because:

- The available pool of potential parent applicants had been dramatically reduced. Two reasons for this reduction surfaced. First, the rise in inflation had forced many parents to return to full-time jobs. Second, parents of bused students living a distance from school had difficulty in participating in any ESAA-sponsored activities or in even cultivating a sense of ownership and responsibility for the school.

Further, few sites made conscious, formal attempts to hire parents as aides. Yet parents were hired at nearly half the sites because:

- Principals were key actors in the recruitment and hiring of paid aides. They were inclined to hire people whose work they knew well. Often, such people came from the school volunteer ranks and were parents.

Moreover, the fact that paid aides had little involvement in decision making at the project and classroom level seemed to be related to three factors:

- The school structure was under the tight control of the district, with little opportunity for influence from outside the administration.

- Many professional staff were skeptical about the level of education of parent aides and their subsequent ability to provide significant recommendations to the component.

- At most sites, potential aide participation in decision making was limited by the lack of formal communication between aides and professional staff members, and among aides themselves. Aides, in other words, tended to be isolated.

On the positive side, those sites where classroom aides were given major instructional tasks and some responsibility for classroom decision making were characterized by teachers/ESAA staff that believed in the potentially valuable contributions of parents and yet recognized that parents cannot necessarily be expected to have adequate amounts of experience in actually teaching youngsters. Therefore, they provided a good deal of pre- and in-service training activities. In addition, the professional staff set up many opportunities for parent aides to communicate formally and informally among themselves, with teachers, and with other professional staff.

With respect to parent volunteerism, we found that a variety of circumstances existed which served to limit the need for projects to design formal ESAA volunteer programs. The most prevalent circumstances included:

- Lack of any regulatory requirements

- Having long-established, non-ESAA volunteer programs already operating on-site which included participation by ESAA and non-ESAA parents

- A general cutback in volunteer programs because of the economy, which had forced many parents back to work

- The decision on the part of districts not to have a volunteer program because they preferred hiring paraprofessionals to do the work instead

In trying to account for the lack of home tutoring in ESAA projects, we found that most projects had not even considered this as a mechanism for parental involvement. For those that had entertained home tutoring possibilities, serious district and ESAA budget cutbacks was the reason given most often as to why home tutoring programs were not developed.

Because so few sites had parents involved in the instructional process, we had difficulty in identifying actual patterns of outcomes that cut across sites. However, the data did contain examples of consequences of parental involvement as paid paraprofessionals--examples that seemed to substantiate the potential importance of parental participation in this functional area. In the educational-institutional realm, identified positive outcomes included: (1) changes in instructional approaches prompted by aides' insights and suggestions; (2) improvements in student performance; and (3) increased general parental interest concerning student performance and teaching methods, prompted by aides serving as a link with the parental community.

The individual/personal outcomes that were most commonly reported by parent aides as deriving from their involvement in the instructional process included: (1) considerable gains in self-confidence; (2) an increased ability to understand the school personnel, administration, and overall structure; (3) a high degree of satisfaction from seeing a child make educational gains; (4) feelings that they could more effectively help and understand their own children; and (5) pleasure from simply gaining more knowledge themselves.

TITLE VII

Our data in this function area revealed that:

- Title VII projects did not make a special effort to involve parents as paid instructional aides.

- Because aides often conducted the lessons in the target (non-English) language, parents in these roles had some autonomy in determining what to teach and how. Aides did not, however, have much to say in the overall design of projects.

- Very few Title VII projects had initiated systematic components of parental participation as instructional, classroom volunteers. Thus, the opportunity for involvement in this area was quite limited.

- Although there were no major findings in the area of parents as teachers of their own children at home, three study sites had developed components of this type that could serve as models for others.

The data revealed a few factors which appeared to influence the likelihood of parents participating in the education function of a project. First, Title VII legislation and regulations were silent in the area of parental involvement in the instructional process. The fact that this type of activity was not proscribed was not a sufficient impetus for the successful integration of parents into the education function. Second, projects neither emphasized the recruitment of parents as instructional aides, nor did they implement outreach strategies for informing parents that their involvement as either aides or instructional volunteers was desirable for the project. Thus, many parents reported not even knowing that their help was needed. Although the organization and coordination of parents within the paid paraprofessional component was well provided for, this was a problem in the development of a systematic instructional volunteer component. The responsibility for matching the parents' skills to the needs of the individual classrooms was not clearly allocated.

Last, and possibly most importantly was the effect that staff interest and commitment had on parental involvement in the instructional process. Wherever staff interest combined with desire for creating a specific place for parental involvement, the parents responded, and participated.

As was the case with governance, the consequences attributed to the participations of parents in the education function were largely of a personal nature. Parents and students reportedly benefited from this form of parental involvement. Teachers were able to implement a greater variety of instructional activities as a result of the involvement of parents as either aides or volunteers, an effect that had personal and institutional consequences.

FOLLOW THROUGH

The Follow Through regulations are clear in their insistence that parents be given first priority in the hiring of aides and that projects actively support the development of those aides. Three major findings emerged from the Site Study about the nature of parental involvement in this area:

- Parents were widely used as classroom aides. All sites had parents in aide positions and nearly 75 percent of all classroom aides were parents of current or former Follow Through children. Most sites either now have or once had a policy of actively recruiting parents to fill aide positions.

- The actual number of <u>current</u> parents employed as aides was rather small, however. Once hired, parents tended to stay in these positions when their children graduated from Follow Through, so many of the parents found in aide positions were actually parents of <u>former</u> Follow Through children. Some sites did hire current parents in part-time temporary positions known as "parent trainees," "rotating aides," or "8-week aides."

- Parent classroom aides played a major instructional role in the classroom, frequently functioning more as co-teachers than as assistants. Although active in classroom decisions, aides typically did not participate in school- or program-level decisions.

Several factors helped explain why sites tended to emphasize the placement of parents in aide positions. First, the regulations specifically require that parents be given priority in hiring. Although few current parents or staff were aware of the regulations, there was evidence that the original design and policies of local projects were guided by them. Second, several of the model sponsors associated with sites in the study called for parents in the classroom as aides and volunteers to assist in the individualization of instruction. Finally, many project staff members were enthusiastic advocates for hiring parents as aides, believing that by so doing they not only enhanced the educational experience of the children but they also helped parents from the community acquire the education and skills needed to improve their status.

Despite the emphasis on hiring parents to fill positions, there were few parents of current Follow Through children working as aides at the sites studied. Several reasons were identified for this pattern: (1) there was extremely low turnover among aides, and no local policy stipulating that aides had to resign when their children left the program; hence, there were few openings for new Follow Through parents; (2) there was a trend toward increasing "professionalization" of aides, with district personnel offices assuming a larger role in the selection and hiring of classroom aides; (3) in many districts unionization of aides created additional restrictions on the hiring and placement of new aides; (4) projects typically saw their aide program as part of the project's instructional components, rather than as an avenue for parental involvement.

Turning to the final finding, that Follow Through aides tended to have a substantial instructional role in the classroom, several contributory factors were apparent: (1) sponsors frequently insisted that aides have a major

instructional role; (2) Follow Through aides tended to have considerable experience in the classroom and in the model--often more than the teacher; (3) sponsors and staff tended to provide a great deal of training for aides; and (4) teachers and administrators at the Follow Through sites were generally supportive of the role played by aides in instruction.

The Follow Through regulations are also clear in their insistence that parents be involved in the classroom as volunteers. Two major findings came from the data about the nature of parental involvement in this area:

- Relatively few sites had active programs to recruit parent classroom volunteers.

- Sites that did have classroom volunteer programs tended to provide a substantial classroom instructional role for those volunteers.

Several factors seem to explain the sites' lack of emphasis in this area: (1) some projects had other mechanisms for ensuring a parental presence in the classroom, such as stipended "parent trainees"; (2) funding cutbacks at some sites forced elimination of the organizational and support features that once made a classroom volunteer program possible; and (3) staff, teachers, and even parents frequently did not support the notion of parent volunteers in the classroom, believing that parents are not qualified to teach children. The data also suggest that the primary reason why some sites were able to attract parents to the classroom was that they had an organized recruitment and training effort that was supported by the project and coordinated by a single individual. Further, sites that were successful at recruiting parent classroom volunteers usually used a variety of recruitment techniques that centered around personal contact by project staff, supplemented by other impersonal methods, such as newsletters and notices. Successful sites also supported parental participation by providing babysitting or transportation services, along with public awards and recognition.

Once they were in the classroom, parent volunteers appear to have been able to play a substantial instructional role because of extensive training, because of the efforts of the Parent Coordinator to "sell" parent volunteers to teachers, and because Follow Through teachers and administrators at those sites were generally supportive of active parent volunteers in the classroom.

Several personal and institutional outcomes were reported by respondents at sites with volunteer programs: parents became more aware of activities in the school; parents became more supportive of Follow Through; teachers were able to individualize instruction for their students. Some problems were also reported: lack of continuity among volunteers caused confusion among the children, and some teachers mentioned that volunteers would frequently not show up when promised, after the teacher had planned activities for them.

The Site Study concentrated upon describing activities and programs implemented by local projects that encouraged parents to participate at home by reinforcing lessons taught in school. Two major findings emerged from this search:

- Most sites provided some activities to involve parents in teaching their children at home.

- There were two basic approaches to providing these home teaching activities. Five sites had more formal organized programs with central coordination, individualized training for parents, development of defined programs for individual children, and provisions for monitoring students' and/or parents' progress. Five other sites had less formal programs, consisting primarily of workshops and/or distribution of handbooks or materials.

Unlike parental involvement in governance or the classroom, home teaching programs or activities generally filled a void at sites. Creating such a program did not require changing or displacing anything that already existed. Thus, the primary contributory factor explaining the presence of these

programs at some sites was the work of key individuals who wanted them and took the initiative to create them. There was seldom any mention of resistance to these efforts from any quarter. Efforts by local staff were frequently reinforced and supported by staff from the sponsor--several of whom actively supported this form of parental involvement and included it in their models.

The two most frequently mentioned obstacles to involving parents in these programs or activities were (1) the low educational level of Follow Through parents made it difficult for them to participate effectively as home tutors and (2) many parents felt generally uncomfortable about coming to school. The more successful sites developed approaches to overcome these two obstacles, such as providing extensive and individualized training to parents, regular monitoring of parent progress by staff, and provision of training and services in the home.

Data on outcomes were again limited to anecdotes from parents and staff, but these reports suggest that the two principal outcomes from these home teaching programs were, first, that children's school performance improved as a result of home teaching by parents and, second, that by participating in the home teaching program parents who once felt alienated from and uncomfortable in the school came to better understand what occurred in their children's classroom. This understanding often translated into broader support for the Follow Through project.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PARENT EDUCATION

Although individual projects frequently considered any training for parents to be "parent education," the Site Study limited this domain to activities designed to instruct parents in skills to help themselves in the home or community including enhancement of career opportunities.

TITLE I

Most projects offered some form of parent education, including parenting skills and assisting children with classwork. Higher levels of parent education were associated with an attitude on the part of project personnel that parents were more effective participants if they acquired information and skills, and with the presence of a Parent Coordinator. Projects with lower levels lacked Parent Coordinators, and staff members felt that parental involvement was unimportant.

ESAA

Four sites had ESAA-sponsored parent education activities. Parents generally played no role in determining the content of the Parent Education function. The lack of a mandate in the Federal legislation and regulations was cited as a reason not to have this component. Where these components existed the staff did not feel that parental input about the content was needed. Furthermore, Parent Education was not a "hot" enough topic to generate much parent interest.

TITLE VII

Most sites offered some form of parent education activities, ranging from one-time workshops on parenting to components offering ongoing classes in compensatory education, etc. Only four of the programs either offered or were affiliated with more formal educational programs (e.g., General Education Diploma, English as a Second Language). The contributory factors cited for Title I and ESAA applied here, as well.

FOLLOW THROUGH

Follow Through regulations require that sites provide a range of activities designed to instruct parents in skills to help themselves in the home or community ("parent enrichment"), as well as activities promoting "career development." Four major findings emerged from the Site Study data:

- Parent enrichment was widespread. Fourteen sites provided at least some training to parents in four areas: parenting skills, community awareness, home skills/crafts, and health and nutrition.

- Parents had a major role in determining the direction and scope of parent enrichment activities.

- Career development programs were widespread. Fourteen sites provided at least some support to the career development of parents and aides.

- Very few sites had the mandated PAC Career Development Committees actively supervising their career development program.

Many of the same contributory factors encountered in other areas also helped explain these findings. First, the regulatory requirements were certainly an important influence, at least historically, on a project's development of parent education programs. Second, Follow Through staff as a result of the Head Start influence on the program tended to see their program as a comprehensive effort to help children by helping their parents. Thus, there was a large reservoir of support for parent education among staff. Third, there was a widespread belief among staff that parent education activities were an effective mechanism for recruiting parents for other types of participation in the project. Fourth, parent education programs tended to fill a "void" in the schools and did not require any displacement of existing programs or prerogatives. Finally, many sites created their parent education programs in part because there were federal funds to support them. These funds were being phased out at the time of the data collection, and parent education efforts were consequently suffering.

At the level of individual parents, several reasons were offered for participating in parent education activities: (1) they provided an opportunity to socialize with other parents; (2) they contributed to parents' personal growth and development; (3) they afforded an opportunity to learn things that would help children; and (4) they provided a convenient means for parents to feel that they were participating in their children's schooling. Reasons for not participating echoed those offered in other areas: discomfort in the school, lack of child care, lack of time, and lack of transportation. Successful parent education programs tended to be those that found the means to overcome these obstacles.

The outcomes from participation in parent education programs reflect the motivations mentioned above. Parents found the parent workshops informative, providing them with information and skills useful in the home; they found career development programs attractive because they frequently brought with them the prospect or promise of higher salaries and increased job responsibility.

OTHER FORMS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The final two forms of parental involvement, Non-Instructional Support and School-Community Relations, were considered together because local projects tended to combine them operationally. For purposes of the Site Study, Non-Instructional Support Services were defined as any activity engaged in by parents other than clasroom instruction and governance that contributed to the economic, political, or moral support of the federally-funded project. School-Community Relations encompassed two interrelated aspects of interaction between the school and its community: communication and interpersonal relations.

TITLE I

School support activities, sponsored by the Title I project, took place infrequently and were not a major activity where they occurred. Little school support took place either because there was no great interest in it, or there were non-Title I mechanisms for such parental participation.

Virtually all projects engaged in community-school relations activities: primarily communication, seldom interpersonal relations. Communications from the project to parents seemed to be associated with the belief, on the part of parents and staff, that it was necessary, and with a historical pattern in the community of communication from the school to the parents.

The outcomes associated with these forms of parental involvement were that parents reported heightened levels of awareness and increased positive feelings about the Title I project, while principals and teachers stated that they had developed more positive relations with children with whose parents they communicated interpersonally.

ESAA

Six sites had school support activities, but these were not ongoing or programmatic in nature. In all of the six study sites that had no ESAA-sponsored school support activities, successful non-ESAA sponsored support functions were already in operation.

The majority of the study sites provided a variety of opportunities for improving community-school relations. Most relied on a combination of home-school outreach services, Parent Coordinator liaison activities, annd one-way written communication efforts.

This rather higher level of activity is due to the fact that Project Directors must make available to the served population information about the project's

services and activities. Thus, some amount of effort in the direction of improving community-school relations might be expected to be a structural feature of most ESAA projects.

TITLE VII

Nearly three-fourths of the projects had school support activities in which parents provided some resources to the projects. A combination of one-way communication and interpersonal exchanges were used by projects to keep parents informed and the lines of communication open. The level of communication varied a great deal across the sites, and generally was not very high.

Coordination of activities was one of the most salient factors contributing to success in this area. We also found that the participation of CACs, even at those sites with only token involvement in governance, was instrumental in organizing and recruiting the involvement of other parents. Lastly, the attitudes of the project staff were related to the parental response to these activities, in that a paternalistic staff attitude stifled parental involvement, whereas a supportive one fostered increased levels of participation. Although there were a few instances where parents had augmented project resources, the outcomes attributed to parental involvement in this area were largely personal and affected primarily the parents themselves.

FOLLOW THROUGH

The Follow Through regulations do not mention either of these forms of involvement explicitly, but they do make clear the expectation that parents will be involved in all phases of school support and that the project will strive to maintain effective and frequent communication between project staff and the parents they serve. Three major findings emerged from the Site Study data:

- Parental involvement in non-instructional support services was widespread and diverse; all sites involved parents in at least some way in non-instructional support, and most had several types of involvement.

- Policy Advisory Committees played a major role in fostering and coordinating non-instructional support activites. At many sites this was the principal function of the PAC.

- Activities to improve communications and relations between parents and the school were widespread; almost all of the sites studied provided at least some practices or events in these areas.

The evidence from the Site Study suggested several reasons for the abundance of activities in these two domains. First, Follow Through staff and parents actively supported activities in these areas. In many respects, these are the least controversial forms of parental involvement and most closely resemble the traditional "PTA" parental involvement. Thus, they represent forms of participation that administrators and teachers have traditionally supported. Second, these activities were widespread because Parent Coordinators typically played a major role in organizing and promoting them. Third, sites that were most active in these areas typically also had strong and active PACs and were located in communities with a tradition of citizen particiption.

At the level of individual parents, reasons offered for participation in activities in these areas included: their convenience as a means for participation (they did not require much time and could be irregular) and their resemblance to what parents traditionally perceived as their role in the schools. Reasons for not participating included geographic distance from the schools, other commitments among single and working parents, ethnic or racial tensions in the schools, and general alienation from and discomfort with the schools.

Outcomes reported from participation in these areas included: (1) increased parental involvement in other areas as a result of the introduction to the program that parents receive through non-instructional support and communication activities; (2) increased resources for the project and schools as a result of fundraisers, work parties, etc.; and (3) the very survival of the project as a result of letter writing campaigns and other demonstrations of support from parents. At the level of personal outcomes, reported benefits were fewer but nonetheless present. Staff and parents often noted that the events sponsored by the project had the effect of making parents more aware and supportive of Follow Through.

ADDITIONAL POLICY ISSUES AND CONCLUSIONS

In addition to the policy-relevant issues discussed earlier, we also examined issues related to: (1) funding considerations (e.g., total funding levels, allocations to parental involvement) and impacts on parental involvement; (2) multiple federal programs at a site and impacts on parental involvement; and (3) the effects of parental involvement on the overall quality of educational services. The findings across programs were sufficiently similar to permit us to report them in one summary, undifferentiated by program.

In the area of funding we posed three fundamental questions:

- Do total funding levels affect the quantity and quality of parental involvement activities?
- Do the timing and duration of grants influence parental involvement activities?
- Does the amount of funding specifically devoted to parental involvement affect parental involvement activities?

The financial data available through projects were incomplete and virtually impossible to verify. Allocations for parental involvement covered very

different activities in different districts. This lack of uniformity made it impossible to relate the funding level to the level of parental involvement. This lack of uniformity in defining activities to be costed as part of parental involvement can be traced to the federal level where there are few guidelines, and little technical assistance, with these aspects of budgeting. Until a more standardized reporting of parental involvement expenditures is developed, the effects of funding cannot be determined.

In the area of multiple funding we addressed one general policy question: When multiple programs are funded at a site, are the quantity and quality of parental involvement activities affected?

While most districts were carrying out several federal projects calling for parental involvement, there was little interaction among those projects. No effect could be detected of such multiple funding, and it was not possible to draw conclusions about the value, for instance, of forming a single advisory group to serve all federal projects simultaneously.

The final policy-relevant question to be addressed by the study was: Do parental involvement activities influence the quality of educational services provided to students?

In analyzing our data we focused on four ways in which parents could affect the quality of education: (1) parents can influence the design, administration, and evaluation of project services offered to students through participation on advisory groups as well as through less formal interactions with project personnel; (2) they can influence the instructional process through their involvement as aides, volunteers, and individuals; (3) they can provide monetary and moral support for the project and its students; and last (4) they can influence the climate of a project school by the manner in which they interact with project personnel and perhaps with each other.

We found some projects in which parents materially affected the quality of education provided to students. Advisory groups affected the design and

delivery of student services in several projects; parents affected what was taught in the classroom and how it was taught in their roles as classroom aides and volunteers; parents augmented project resources through fundraisers and contributions, and they maintained regular communication and relations with the schools.

Overall, then, we found a very wide range in the level of parental involvement. We also found that active participation by parents produced real benefits for the schools, for the parents, and for the children. Probably the most encouraging conclusion coming from the Study, though, was that parental involvement can be stimulated. Although projects did have to contend with the particular social and administrative contexts within which they operated, they were able to take concrete steps to overcome obstacles in that environment and increase parental participation in their programs. The experience of these sites provides valuable lessons to others interested in increasing parental participation in their schools.

REFERENCES

The following reports have been prepared from the Study of Parental Involvement in Four Federal Programs.

Federal Programs Survey Phase:

Parents and Federal Education Programs: Some Preliminary Findings from the Study of Parental Involvement. (Keesling, 1980)

Site Study Phase:

Parents and Federal Education Programs, Volume 1: The Nature, Causes, and Consequences of Parental Involvement in Federal Education Programs. (Melaragno, Keesling, Lyons, Robbins, and Smith, 1981)

Parents and Federal Education Programs, Volume 2: Summary of Program-Specific Findings. (Keesling, Melaragno, Robbins, and Smith, 1981)

Parents and Federal Education Programs, Volume 3: ESAA. (Robbins and Dingler, 1981)

Parents and Federal Education Programs, Volume 4: Title VII. (Cadena-Munoz and Keesling, 1981)

Parents and Federal Education Programs, Volume 5: Follow Through. (Smith and Nerenberg, 1981)

Parents and Federal Education Programs, Volume 6: Title I. (Melaragno, Lyons, and Sparks, 1981)

Parents and Federal Education Programs, Volume 7: Methodologies Employed in the Study of Parental Involvement. (Lee, Keesling, and Melaragno, 1981)

Phase V Materials:

Involving Parents: A Handbook for Participation in Schools. (Lyons, Robbins, Dingler, Longshore, Nerenberg, Sanders, and Sparks, 1981)

Self-Assessment Manual for Parental Involvement. (Robbins, Smith, Longshore, and Lyons, 1981)